

FROM THE CELL TO THE WORLD

was too frequent. May God have sent us one who will be good for this city."¹ It was a most unfortunate choice. Cardinal de Noellet was a tyrannical and incompetent French prelate of the usual type furnished by Avignon ; he and his colleague, the Abbot at Perugia, were speedily to drive their Italian subjects to desperation.

This was a dark and dismal year for all Italy, and especially for Catherine's native city : ^{ff} In Siena," writes one of her chroniclers, at the opening of his records for this year, " there was pestilence, war, and very great scarcity, so that the bushel of grain was worth two golden florins." ²

In the spring, a fierce war on a small scale broke out in the contado. One of the Salimbeni, Andrea di Niccolo, had seized Perolla, a castle of the Sienese Maremma near Massa, and hurled the daughter of its late lord, Geri (apparently himself a kinsman of the Salimbeni), to whom it rightfully belonged, down from the battlements. Secure in this stronghold, he gathered bandits and exiles round him, murdered and plundered all through the Maremma, levying blackmail up to the very gates of Siena. With aid from the Florentines (to whom in like manner they had rendered assistance in subduing the Ubaldini in the preceding year), the Sienese got together a large army, under their Senator (the Count Lodovico da Mogliano already mentioned), and, on April 23, forced the place to surrender. The Senator returned to Siena with twenty-nine prisoners, including Messer Andrea Salimbeni himself. Sixteen were executed, but the Senator, either by reasons of friendship or for fear of the Salimbeni, shrank from doing justice on the chief offender. Upon this the populace armed and assailed the Palace of the Signoria, demanding justice with threats of raising the whole city. The Defenders, intimidated, gave authority to the leader of the mob, one Noccio di Vanni, a saddler by trade, to do what seemed to him to the advantage of the Republic. Noccio at once led his followers to

¹ *Cronica di Bologna*, col. 495.

² *Amah di Siena dal 1300 al 1400*. Biblioteca
Comunale di Siena, MS. A. iv. i., f. 18.